

Message Text

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44

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RABAT IRP

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AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY OSLO

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SUBJECT: SADAT INTERVIEW WITH NORWEGIAN JOURNALIST

SUMMARY. IN DEC 18 INTERVIEW WITH NORWEGIAN JOURNALIST, PRESIDENT
SADAT REPORTEDLY SAID THAT A. ISRAEL MUST MAKE SIGNIFICANT
WITHDRAWAL ON ALL ARAB FRONTS BEFORE GENEVA RESUMPTION IS POSSIBLE;
B. ISRAELI MUST ROLL BACK BEFORE SUEZ CANAL WILL BE OPENED; C). EGYPT
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IS IN CONTACT WITH USG AT HIGHEST LEVELS; D) SUPERPOWERS HAVE

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN AREA, AND E. MIDDLE EAST SITUATION IS "EXPLOSIVE". COMMENT: IN WAKE ALLON VISIT TO WASHINGTON, GOE PUBLIC NEGOTIATING POSITION IS HARDENING. WHILE SADAT STILL RETAINS HOPE IN STEP-BY-STEP STRATEGY, PRESSURES ON HIM TO FORSAKE THIS APPROACH, WHICH MANY BELIEVE HAS LED TO IMPASSE, ARE NOW HEAVY. END SUMMARY.

1. DEC 19 EDITION OF CAIRO DAILY GUMHURIYYA APPEARED ON STREETS MORE THAN ONE HOUR LATER THAN USUAL, CARRYING EXCLUSIVE FRONT PAGE INTERVIEW CONDUCTED WITH SADAT PREVIOUS DAY BY NORWEGIAN JOURNALIST ANDERS SANDWEG (PHONETIC) WHOSE NEWSPAPER AFFILIATION IS NOT SPECIFIED. HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVIEW FOLLOW:

A. ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. ISRAEL WILL NOT REMAIN ON A SINGLE INCH OF OCCUPIED ARAB LAND AND MUST "WITHDRAW FROM BASIC AND BROAD AREA ON ALL (RPT ALL) FRONTS" BEFORE WE WILL GO TO GENEVA TO DISCUSS BASIS OF THE PERMANENT PEACE.

B. SUEZ CANAL. CANAL IS EGYPTIAN; EGYPT HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING NAVIGATION. "WE WILL NOT PERMIT RESUMPTION OF NAVIGATION BEFORE ISRAEL PULLS BACK." (COMMENT: FAHMY MADE SIMILAR POINT TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES ON NOV 12, FBIX BE 140058.)

C. SUPERPOWERS. US AND USSR GUARANTEES CEASEFIRE AND SC RES 338 AND CONSEQUENTLY HAVE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT.

D. GOE/USG RELATIONS. "WE ARE NOW HOLDING CONTACTS AND DISCUSSIONS AT HIGHEST LEVELS WITH USG. I AM TALKING HERE OF EGYPT ONLY. THE RESOLUTIONS WHICH WERE PASSED AT RABAT CONFERENCE WERE MISUNDERSTOOD IN US, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE BEGUN NOW TO UNDERSTAND REAL MEANING OF THESE RESOLUTIONS."

D. GOE/USSR RELATIONS. USSR HAS EXPLAINED ITS POSITION CLEARLY AT VLADIVOSTOK; BOTH SUPERPOWERS AGREED ON RESUMPTION OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. BREZHNEV COMES IN JANUARY TO EGYPT, SYRIA AND IRAQ. "RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND USSR ARE IMPROVING."
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F. USG ENERGY POSITION. "SOME STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN US ABOUT ENERGY AND THE USE OF FORCE IN THE ADVENT OF IMPOSITION OF OIL EMBARGO. THIS NATURALLY WILL CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR ARAB-AMERICAN RELATIONS. WE HOPE THESE STATEMENTS MADE IN AMERICA ARE NOT TRUE. I HOPE AGREEMENT REACHED RECENTLY BETWEEN PRESIDENTS FORD AND GISCARD D'ESTAING WILL RESTORE UNDERSTANDING."

G. ARAB UNITY AND PALESTINIANS. "I DO NOT FAVOR RESOLUTIONS TAKEN HASTILY. REAL UNITY WILL TAKE LONG TIME, BUT WE ARE MOVING IN RIGHT DIRECTION THROUGH RIGHT CHANNEL." PALESTINIANS MUST SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. "I CANNOT SPEAK IN NAME OF PALESTINIANS."

H. SHARM AL-SHAikh. ASKED ABOUT ISRAELI INSISTANCE ON CONTINUED PRESENCE SHARM AL-SHAikh, SADAT SAID EGYPT WILL NOT ACCEPT ISRAELI PRESENCE ON ONE INCH OF EGYPTIAN TERRITORY. FURTHERMORE, "WHAT IS USE OF SHARM AL-SHAikh NOW SINCE THERE IS BAB AL-MANDEB".

2. COMMENT: POLITICALLY SENSITIVE EGYPTIANS WILL NOTE TIME FRAME IN WHICH RECENT SADAT INTERVIEWS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED. IN ABC INTERVIEW TELEVISED YESTERDAY IN US, SADAT REPORTEDLY LAID CONSIDERABLE STRESS ON FACT THAT PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAVE ALWAYS "KEPT THEIR WORD", THAT MOMENTUM TOWARD PEACE HAS SLACKENED BUT NOT STOPPED, AND NEXT THREE MONTHS ARE "VERY CRUCIAL" (CAIRO PRESS, DEC 19). ABC INTERVIEW, HOWEVER, TOOK PLACE EARLY THIS MONTH.

3. SANDWEG INTERVIEW IS SET IN MORE NEAR-TERM CONTEXT (SITUATION IS "EXPLOSIVE") AND DIRECTLY ADDRESSES DANGER OF WAR ("WE MUST DO OUR BEST TO DEFUSE BOMB WHICH IS ABOUT TO GO OFF"). (AHRAH CARTOON TODAY SHOWS ISRAEL PRODDING WAR GOD AND IS CAPTIONED: "OBSERVERS FORESEE IMMINENT WAR IN ME".)

4. WITH EXCEPTION FAHMY'S NOV 12 COMMENT THAT FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL MUST PRECEDE REOPENING OF CANAL (FBIS BE 140058), GOE HAS GENERALLY REFRAINED FROM ISSUING SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS ON EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATING POSITION IN RECENT WEEKS. HOWEVER, IN WAKE OF LATEST PUBLIC REMARKS BY ALLON AND RABIN (LATTER'S DEC 3 HAARETZ INTERVIEW WAS PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE TO EGYPTIANS -- CAIRO 9881) AND DISCLOSURE OF ALLEGED 11 POINTS PASSED BY ALLON TO GOE THROUGH SEC KISSINGER (TEL AVIV 7296), GOE PUBLIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEGOTIATING POSITION HAS HARDENED. FAHMY SPOKE TO MENA DEC 15 OF NEW "CONDITIONS" FOR FINAL SETTLEMENT, INCLUDING 50 YEAR FREEZE ON ISRAELI IMMIGRATION. ON DEC 17 SADAT TOLD IRANIAN JOURNALIST RECENT "RIGID" STATEMENTS AND BEHAVIOR OF RABIN, ALLON AND OTHER MAKE HIM WONDER IF GOE REALLY WANTS PEACE (FBIS L171420), AND NOW HE HAS TAKEN ENTIRELY NEW AND TOUGHER PUBLIC POSITION, VIZ. ISRAEL MUST WITHDRAW ON ALL FRONTS BEFORE IT IS POSSIBLE TO CONVENE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS BASIC PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT CAN BE CONSTRUCTED. IN A SENSE, THIS LATEST PRONOUNCEMENT IS ANTI-PATHETIC TO SOVIET VIEW THAT THE SOONER GENEVA IS RECONVENED THE BETTER, SINCE CONFERENCE WILL AFFORD MOSCOW BEST OPPORTUNITY TO REINSERT ITSELF INTO NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

5. HOWEVER, SADAT'S COMMENT THAT HE IS IN CONTACT WITH HIGHEST

LEVELS OF USG WAS, IN OUR VIEW, A DECLARATION THAT HE STILL
RETAINS HOPE THAT AMERICAN STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH CAN BRING ABOUT
TANGIBLE MOVEMENT IN SINAI WHICH HE NEEDS SO BADLY TO DEFEND
HIS POLICY. THERE IS RISING TIDE OF EGYPTIAN AND ARAB CONCERN
THAT GOE FAITH IN USG DIPLOMATIC ABILITY AND INTENTIONS HAS
LED TO IMPASSE. DIPLOMATIC IMPASSE, OF COURSE, WAS SADAT'S
ANNOUNCED REASON FOR GOING TO WAR LAST OCTOBER. THERE ARE HIGHLY
PLACED GOE ADVISORS WHO NOW FEAR, HAVING READ IN HAARETZ
THAT GOE WILL ENDEAVOR STALL FINAL SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS
FOR SIX OR SEVEN YEARS, THAT NEW STALEMATE HAS ALREADY OCCURRED.
PRESSURES ON SADAT TO FORESAKE AMERICAN APPROACH ARE NOW
HEAVY.
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